

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez (CA-47) today issued the following statement regarding Vietnam's decision to charge Vietnamese attorney and human rights activist Le Cong Dinh with the capital crime of attempting to overthrow the country's communist government. Mr. Dinh could now face the death penalty. Along with Mr. Dinh, several of the following activists may also be put on trial in the next few days: Tran Huynh Duy Thuc, Nguyen Tien Trung, and Pham Thanh Nghien.

"Vietnam's decision to charge Le Cong Dinh is truly unconscionable. The treatment Mr. Dinh and other activists have received at the hands of their own country should be condemned by the United States and the international community."

"It is clear that Vietnam has not, and will not, honor its stated commitment to uphold human rights and democratize the country's political process. Instead, Vietnam's government has chosen to threaten, detain, and persecute its own citizens in an attempt to suppress dissent. History has shown time and time again that these tactics will not work, and will not help Vietnam achieve the international recognition and respect it desires.

"I sincerely hope that the government of Vietnam will reconsider the charges against Mr. Dinh and other activists like him. But if it doesn't, I hope this alarming abuse of human rights will finally convince the U.S. State Department and international community to take concrete action against Vietnam."

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